Mathur, R. P. & Prakash, I. (1981b): Comparative efficacy of three anticoagulant rodenticides against Indian desert rodents. *Protection Ecology 3*: 327-331.

Saxena, Y. & Sharma, R. K. (1981): Laboratory evaluation of brodifacoum bait against Indian desert gerbil *Meriones hurrianae* Jerdon. *Pestology 5*: 22-23.

Soni, B. K. (1981): Efficacy of WBA 8119 (Brodifacoum) to Indian rodents. *Rodent Newsletter* ICAR *5*: 28-29.

Srihari, K. & Sridhara, S. (1977): Toxicity of a new rodenticide vacor to lesser *Bandicota bengalensis. Curr. Sci., 46*(13): 453-454.

Srivastava, A. S., Mathur, Y. K., Upadhyay, K. D., Bhadauria, A. S. & Srivastava, J. P. (1980): Evaluation of Silmurin (Scilliroside) against field and domestic rats. *Rodent Newsletter* ICAR *4*(3):

2. INTERACTION BETWEEN SAMBAR (*CERVUS UNICOLOR*) AND INDIAN WILD DOG (*CUON ALPINUS*) IN SARISKA NATIONAL PARK

In April 1986, I had seen a wild dog in Sariska and had reported my observations in the journal (*JBNHS* 83, p. 654). On my subsequent visit to the park last month, Shri Pratap Singh, Forest Guard informed me that the three reported wild dogs had separated; two were being sighted near Pandu Pol while one was seen often between the main gate and Kalighati on the main road of the Park.

On 10th January at 10.00 a.m., I was driving back to the main gate when I saw a herd of six female sambar and three young ones, each of which appeared to be about a year old, on a water hole by the roadside some five kilometres from Kalighati. While two females drank water, the rest looked alertly at a female wild dog about twenty yards away. The latter was running and jumping from point to point in an arc of the same radius wagging its tail as if she was trying to play with the former. The sambar on their part did not stamp their feet, did not give an alarm call and did not seem unduly disturbed.

This interaction continued for about a minute. Our jeep was soon followed by two cars which disturbed the herd of sambar and they bolted into the jungle. The wild dog sat down by the roadside looking at the cars. It continued sitting for a while after which it crossed the road in front of our vehicles to go over to the other side. It settled down again into the grass, this time with a couple of cheetal looking towards it. We waited for a while but nothing happened and we drove on. I expressed my surprise at this unusual behaviour to Shri Pratap Singh who informed me that he had observed similar behaviour a few days earlier at the same spot.

This was in sharp contrast to the "normal" behaviour of cheetal and sambar which gave alarm calls and bolted promptly at the arrival of a single wild dog at Kalighati water hole in April, 1986. It may be noted that at that time the three wild dogs were being seen together. The only explanation seems to be that the sambar did not see an individual wild dog as danger any more, while the latter would attempt to attack straying fawns rather than try to pick out an animal from a herd as wild dogs would do while hunting in a pack, thus resulting in this unusual behaviour.

As stated earlier, only three wild dogs have been reported in Sariska and these too have separated. How efficiently they hunt is not known. On enquiry I was told that wild dogs' kills were reported infrequently and usually they were of cheetal fawn. It is significant that though two years have elapsed, the population of wild dogs has not increased according to the reports available.

No. 1, Mansingh Road,
New Delhi - 110 011,
March 3, 1988.

DIVYABHANUSINH

3. SOME OBSERVATIONS ON ANTLER CYCLE OF CAPTIVE CHITAL (*CERVUS AXIS*)

Introduction

The Chital or Spotted deer (*Cervus axis*) is the most common among eight species of Indian deer. It is well known that the Chital casts off antlers periodically. But limited information is available on the different aspects of antler cycle in this species. This communication is an attempt to present additional information on different aspects of antler cycle of Chital observed in captivity.

Methods

The data on different aspects of antler cycle of Chital based on the day-to-day observations recorded at the Nandankanan Biological Park, Orissa for a continuous period of 12 years and 6 months (1 October, 1970 to 31 March, 1983) were obtained and studied.

The park is within the biogeographical zone of the species under study. Specimens used for this study include those collected from different parts of Orissa and those born and brought up in the park. The number of Chital stags under observation varied from two to 16.

Results and Discussion

Period of antler casting: During the observation period, 89 antler castings (spike as well as branched) were recorded on a captive population of Chital stags which varied from 3-11 individuals (Table 1). Antler casting occurred during a nine-month period from August to April. All the stags regularly cast their antlers annually and never retained them to the next year. Majority of castings (70 of 89 castings, 79%) occurred during a three-month period from November to January. Ten castings (11%) occurred during a three-month

Table 1

Monthly distribution of casting of antlers and rubbing off velvet by captive chital stags

Month	Stags casting antlers*	Stags rubbing off velvet**
January	26	2
Febrauary	4	3
March	5	8
April	1	23
May	Nil	31
June	Nil	12
July	Nil	3
August	1	1
September	2	Nil
October	6	Nil
November	20	Nil
December	24	Nil
Total	89	83

* 3-11 stags/year ** 2-16 stags/year